

Testimony before the Michigan Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
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Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about the Library of Michigan. Our mission sums up the reach of our activities and programs quite succinctly and accurately: *The Library of Michigan promotes, advocates and consistently works to achieve the highest level of library service to the State of Michigan, its government, its libraries and its residents.*

And our webpage lists our services in a nutshell:

- Current and historical Michigan books and materials
- State and federal government publications
- State Law Library
- One of the 10 largest genealogy collections in the country
- Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, which reaches Michigan residents who cannot use standard printed material
- Consultation, support and information to librarians, library staff and trustees throughout the state
- Demographic, economic and social data

Of course, much of what we do is behind-the-scenes work keeping our in-house collections current, intact and accessible, or working with library staff and trustees around the state, providing them with resources and continuing education opportunities.

Today, I'd like to highlight how we are also out on the front-line, connecting directly with the patrons of libraries of all types (public, K-12 school media centers, and academic libraries) all around the state through our major statewide projects and programs.

Michigan eLibrary

The Library of Michigan's most significant, most cost-effective, and widest reaching contribution has been and continues to be the Michigan eLibrary or MeL (<http://mel.org>).

- As just one indication of how impressive MeL is, this past summer we received national recognition from the Center for Digital Government with a "2006 Best of the Web" award in the State Government to Citizen Category.

- MeL includes a host of online resources for Michigan residents, including millions of books, journal and magazine articles, dvds, and cds; also practice tests and tutorials, including the ACT which is now going to be essential to the successful completion of graduation requirements for Michigan high school students. It also includes the “Best of the Web” Internet sites that are selected and maintained by librarian subject specialists who identify the most useful and accurate sites for Michigan residents.
- The resources on the Michigan eLibrary cover the gamut of Michigan’s residents’ information needs – information that supports our economy; providing information resources at no additional cost for Michigan’s schools and students; and offering information and resources that help Michigan workers in transition.
- Those starting new businesses will find business plans; information on how to get a loan; marketing information and much more. Those with existing businesses can use MeL to locate industry data, demographic statistics, investment information, and best practices.
- Educators recognize that studies support the link between resources like those MeL offers and increased student achievement in reading, writing and critical thinking. We are working with the Department of Education to ensure and identify where the educational materials we provide through MeL will help our K-12 teachers to enable their students to meet state standards. And, for those potential high school graduates, MeL’s “Tests and Tutorial’s” section includes open access to the LearningExpress Library database for Michigan residents to utilize ACT and other preparation materials and even practice tests.
- Michigan’s workers can also use the LearningExpress Library to help themselves retool for new careers or to find information and resources that will help support them in their current jobs. LearningExpress also supplies prospective students and lifelong learners with access to the SAT, GRE, GED study materials, and civil service exams, as well as other resources that can help identify current job growth areas and locate career advice.
- As Michigan moves from a manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, the Michigan eLibrary is a critical resource for its residents!

- MeL is a great equalizer for Michigan's residents of all geographic locations and socio-economic situations. For those residents who do not have any or adequate home access to the Internet, MeL is readily accessible at public access computing stations at their public libraries, or at their K-12 school library media centers or college and university libraries. While MeL does not preclude the need for, or take the place of locally available content, it effectively enriches those local resources. All of MeL's resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through Michigan's libraries or from home, work, coffee shops, wherever Michigan residents have access to the Internet. For those components requiring remote authentication as a Michigan resident, all that is needed is a Michigan drivers license or state identification number, or if you are a member of a participating MeLCat library, just your library card number.
- Michigan's residents are frequently in need of easily accessible health information, and MeL provides authoritative and easy to use information for both patients and health care professionals.
- By providing the Michigan eLibrary using about \$5M of the federal Library Services and Technology Act dollars we receive annually from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the Library of Michigan saved the state's libraries over \$193 million in 2006 alone. In 2005, residents performed over 16 million searches and downloaded 5.7 million documents. And to date, in only the first quarter of its third year of operation, the Michigan eLibrary Catalog, MeLCat, includes over 18 million items from libraries around the state.
- To access this exemplary resource, just point your browser to: <http://mel.org>

There you can access all of MeL's components:

The Best of the Web and its related Pathfinders, librarian-vetted Internet resources on a wide variety of topics of interest to Michigan residents.

MeL Databases, containing full-text articles from thousands of magazines, journals and newspapers, as well as digital books.

MeLCat, the statewide resource-sharing catalog, which now includes the collections of over 120 Michigan libraries and is growing every month.

Tests and Tutorials including the LearningExpress Library database.

Michigan Educator Resources (MER), vetted Internet resources for Michigan teachers made available in MeL thanks to a new partnership with the Michigan Department of Education and Wayne State University.

MeL Michigana, an expanding set of digitized historical resources from around Michigan.

MeL Michigana and the DPA Grants on MeL

Besides the digitized holdings of the Archives of Michigan, the Michigan County Histories, and the Making of Modern Michigan project, MeL's "Michigana" component will eventually include access to all ten of the Digitization for Preservation and Access (DPA) Grant projects that were awarded and funded by the Library of Michigan in July of 2005, pursuant to recommendations made the Michigan Library Digitization Task Force, a body that was initiated and convened by the Library of Michigan the previous year.

These ten selected projects are purposefully varied geographically and topically, and will result in a well-rounded first set of projects once they are all up and available via the MeL Michigana portal. Portage District Library's "John Todd Photography Collection" (comprised of photos of mid-20th-century southwest Michigan) and Western Michigan's "United States Civil War Collection: Diaries" are already linked through MeL. Coming soon are the Detroit Public Library's 19th- and early 20th-century photographs of Detroit and Wayne State University's photo journalism record from the *Detroit News* of the social, cultural and industrial history of the United States. These and the remaining DPA grant projects are either completed or currently coming to a close now, and all will be available as part of MeL Michigana soon, thanks to a partnership with the University of Michigan Libraries who are helping to make possible the connection of each of these projects through the Michigan eLibrary.

As each of these projects clearly promotes the importance and significance of Michigan's history, their accessibility via MeL will enable researchers and casual history

enthusiasts from all over the state, and even the nation and the world, to investigate and view materials that have until now been available only in-house at the institutions who hold them in safe keeping. Not only will remote access be increased, though. The fact that people from far and wide can identify the existence and location of these collections will likely result in more physical visits to the holdings institutions when researchers seek to examine the digitized materials in person, rather than just virtually.

The Michigan Library Digitization Task Force is currently discussing which of the countless collections held around our state should be considered as the next statewide digitization projects. We have no identified state funds at this time, but there are a number of potential federal grant opportunities that are offered yearly, and we have yet to pursue possible corporate or private foundation sponsorships of such efforts.

Michigan School Library Media Centers

Because of our interest in strengthening the role of the Library of Michigan as the library for Michigan's libraries of all types, including K-12 school library media centers, in August 2005 we convened a group of interested parties from all areas of the state to determine how we might help to achieve a positive impact for Michigan's nearly 2 million primary and secondary school students through improving the situation of their school libraries and enabling them to become Michigan's next generation of digitally-literate and information-fluent citizens.

In 2003 the Library of Michigan used some federal Library Services and Technology Act funds to support a study entitled *The Impact of Michigan School Librarians on Academic Achievement: Kids Who Have Libraries Succeed*. This study found, as stated in the conclusion of its executive summary:

“Qualified Michigan librarians strengthen school library programs in a variety of ways. For librarians to exert a positive influence on teachers and students, they cannot work alone. Adequate levels of professional and support staff are essential to keep the school library open, to manage its collections and technology, to facilitate its use, and to help teachers to teach students to learn. Generally, better performing schools in Michigan have better developed school library programs ...; library staff who spend more time engaged

in activities that contribute to collaborative teaching and learning; and more extensive and sophisticated computer networks extending the reach of the school library.”

Over the past year or more, we have facilitated discussion and activities with nearly two dozen school library media specialists, representatives from the Michigan Association for Media in Education (MAME), the executive director of the Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning (MACUL), the executive director of the Regional Educational Media Centers of Michigan (REMC's) Association, representatives of the Educational Technology and Data Coordination Office of the Michigan Dept. of Education, and an assistant professor who teaches Wayne State University students seeking a graduate masters degree in library and information science with a school library media focus. This group of dedicated experts in the field is following up on the 2003 report I just cited by creating an online or digital informational public relations piece. This piece is intended to highlight visually how our school library media centers enhance and improve the success of our K-12 teachers and their students by helping them to successfully navigate online and in-house information resources in today's ever-changing information world.

Additionally, in order for superintendents, principals, building managers, parents, etc., to learn how their own K-12 institutions can meet the minimal, proficient, or exemplary benchmarks their school library media centers need to achieve to fully contribute to the success of their students, this group has recently updated the *Guidelines for Michigan Library Media Programs (2003) Revised 2006*. The importance of these revised benchmarks was reported last month to the Library of Michigan Board of Trustees, and at that same meeting the Board officially and unanimously endorsed them. The work group will continue to seek the endorsement of other K-12 educational interest groups in state government and beyond as it pursues its mission to revive and increase support for the funding and staffing of Michigan's K-12 school library media centers in every Michigan school district.

The final two programs I'd like to highlight for you today are statewide examples of the kind of programming available throughout the state every week of the year at our nearly 400 public libraries and their branch outlets. The Library of Michigan's Michigan

Public Libraries Data Digest 2006 Edition notes that total library program attendance in fiscal year 2005 for public libraries alone totaled more than 2.1 million participants. Clearly our libraries directly touch the residents of our state, and as part of that process, so do the programs that we roll out statewide from the Library of Michigan.

Michigan Notable Books Program

Michigan provides a wealth of subject matter for writers from Michigan and elsewhere. We are home to hundreds of authors and illustrators, many of whom have deservedly received national and even international acclaim. Since 2002, when the Michigan Notable Books Program (known from 1996-2003 as "Read Michigan") became a program of the Library of Michigan, the participation in the selection of the annual list of 20 books and the programming surrounding the list has expanded yearly. The program still revolves around the selection and publication of the list of the previous year's 20 most notable, best books by Michigan authors or with subject matter related to Michigan. The Library of Michigan convenes and moderates the selection panel of librarians, booksellers, authors, and book reviewers from all around the state. It takes them many months to read, evaluate, and determine the list selections. We encourage libraries and booksellers around the state to promote reading by highlighting the list and formulating programming and events around it.

Additionally, the Library of Michigan Foundation hosts a kick-off event, "The Night for Notables," an evening including programming that recognizes and honors the year's authors and their books and features a keynote speaker who is or has been a Notable author. On April 14th this year, a panel of three -- former Governor William Milliken, his biographer Dave Dempsey, and George Weeks of the *Detroit News* will be the featured speakers.

During the spring, the Library of Michigan Foundation uses grant money and corporate sponsorships to fund a tour of the Notable authors at libraries around the state. Our major sponsors this year are: Borders Books; Cooley Law School; Michigan Humanities Council; ProQuest; and LaSalle Bank. Two years ago, the tour kicked off with 36 visits; last year there were just over 50; and this year nearly 70 libraries will host

an author and have Notables programming for their own communities. The Notable Books program also promotes the state's history, art and culture by spotlighting much that is written about the state and by our own Michigan writers, and in doing so it lays the groundwork for future cultural and historical tourism.

Michigan Reads! One-State/One-Children's-Book Program:

This fall we will launch the Michigan Reads! One-State/One-Children's-Book Program for the third year. With a goal of promoting early childhood literacy and family and caregivers' engagement in reading, this program identifies and promotes programming built around a good example of a book to read aloud to pre-schoolers through second-graders. We try to select a book by a Michigan author or illustrator, or someone from the Great Lakes region. In partnership with the state's Head Start and Michigan School Readiness programs, the Michigan Dept. of Education's Early Childhood and Parenting Programs staff, and now with a more than \$85,000 corporate sponsorship from Target Corporation, we expect this year's program to have great publicity and significant coverage by libraries, pre-school programs, primary schools, and booksellers statewide.

Packets of ready-to-use programming will be created for use by public librarians, elementary school teachers; pre-school and Head Start teachers; as well as take-home handouts of information for parents and caregivers about how to continue the activity of reading to young children on an on-going basis to give them an early start on literacy skills and a step up to later educational success.

The book will be announced late this spring, so schools can have time to factor the title and theme(s) into their curriculum plans, and the program will kick off in late August and run through the month of September, with an author tour being scheduled for about a dozen libraries and schools around the state. We are very excited about how our educational partnerships are expanding in this arena, and we expect this year's Michigan Reads! program to be a hit with everyone involved.

Michigan Libraries

The Library of Michigan's services and collections have served the state well for over 175 years since the library was established in 1828. The Michigan and Genealogy Collections; our state and federal documents, our wonderful rare books collection, and the special materials, equipment, and services offered to our blind and physically handicapped community are essential to our mission as the library that serves state government, the citizens of Michigan, and Michigan's libraries.

Today, more than ever, though, our reach extends to touch the lives of Michigan's residents directly through programming at public, school, academic, and all special types of libraries and through the expanding presence of the Michigan eLibrary. We and the libraries of the state are still about the books – libraries are well-branded as the place where the books are. The Notable Books and Michigan Reads! Programs exemplify that fact. But those same programs and others like them provided by libraries everywhere in the state are also evidence that libraries are, and have been all along, about early childhood literacy and education at all levels. By ensuring that a resource as powerful and extensive as the Michigan eLibrary is available from every library in Michigan where access is assured for those who may not have access from anywhere else, where qualified staff have the expertise to assist the state's residents in utilizing it to the fullest, the Library of Michigan joins with all of the state's libraries to provide health and wellness information to the public; we sustain businesses and communities; and to an increasing and significant extent, we assist the unemployed and the underemployed and those seeking to establish or later change the direction of their career paths. Libraries are the underpinning of people's ability to learn, change, adapt, and grow over the course of their entire lives. Yes, we are about quality of life; we are in fact elemental to the lives of Michigan's residents.